Federal Student Aid /CIO
E-Commerce Application Development (E-CAD)
Quality Assurance Policy

1.0 Description
This document establishes the policy for implementing Quality Assurance (QA) activities for selected Federal Student Aid (FSA) modernization information technology initiatives. These processes are established to comply with requirements outlined in The Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (Clinger-Cohen Act) and the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. Additionally these processes will support the U.S. Department of Education Strategic Goals and Objectives for 2002 – 2007 and the FSA IT Investment Management Operating Procedures.

2.0 Purpose
The purpose is to establish repeatable QA standards, processes and procedures within FSA to ensure that software product development efforts adhere to the established Solution Life Cycle (SLC) methodology, Capability Maturity Model (CMM) guidelines and FSA Architecture standards.
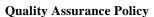
Additionally these activities will support the overall budget and FSA strategic planning processes and comply with OMB, GAO and Federal CIO Council guidance for capital planning.

3.0 Audience
All personnel involved in application development activities throughout a system's development life cycle.

4.0 Policy Statements

4.1 QA activities shall be performed at the Enterprise and Project Levels within the SFA on selected modernization development efforts.   The foundation pillars of a QA effort from the E-CAD, QA Team are Integrity, Trust and Credibility. There are no hidden agendas or pre-conceptions when using an independent resource.

4.2 *FSA Quality Assurance Process Guide* shall be created and maintained by the FSA CIO / E-Commerce Applications Development team to provide implementation guidance for planning and performing Quality Assurance activities.

4.3 At the Enterprise Level

a. The QA Team has a reporting channel to senior management that is independent of the project manager, project software engineering group and other software-related groups.
b. Enterprise Level QA processes shall be documented in an Enterprise QA Plan; and senior management shall periodically review the QA activities and results.
c. A Quality Assurance Steering Committee shall be established to authorize and control QA activities at the Enterprise Level.

4.4 At the Project Level

a. All IT projects selected for QA support shall have independent resources assigned in accordance with the QA planning guidelines.
b. Adherence of software products and activities as applicable to the established SLC procedures, standards and requirements is verified objectively.
c. All affected IT project groups and individuals are informed of software quality assurance activities and results.
d. All affected IT project QA activities shall be audited on a periodic basis in the form of performance measures and customer surveys by the QA Team Lead.
e. Project QA processes shall be documented in a project specific QA Plan as outlined in the SLC and supported by the QA/IV&V Team.

5.0 Policy Maintenance

5.1 This QA Policy is updated and adjusted as required by changes in FSA mission goals and Department of Education priorities.